

Teachers' Psycho-Pedagogical Correlates of Students' Achievements in English Vocabulary in Lagelu Local Government Area, Ibadan

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Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate the extent to which teacher subject matter competence and passion for teaching correlated with students' achievement in English vocabulary among public senior secondary students in Lagelu Local Government of Oyo State. Four research questions were answered in the study. The instruments for data collection were Achievement test in English vocabulary ($r = 0.78$), Teacher subject mastery scale ($r = .81$) and Questionnaire on teachers' passion for teaching (0.87). Data collected were analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation. Also, Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine the relationship, composite contribution and the relative contribution of the independent variable on dependent variable at .05 level. Findings revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between teachers' subject matter competence and achievement in English vocabulary ($r = 0.17$); teachers' passion for teaching and achievement in English vocabulary ($r = 0.28$). The joint effects of the independent variables were also found to be ($R = .389$ and a multiple R^2 of .184) significant at .05 level. The findings of the study further showed that the relative contribution of teachers' subject matter competence ($\beta = .06$) and teachers' passion for teaching ($\beta = .28$) were significant to students' academic achievement in English vocabulary. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that teachers should attend regular workshops, seminars and training programmes in order to increase their content knowledge in teaching.

Keywords: Psycho-pedagogical correlates, Teachers' content knowledge, Passion for teaching, Achievement in English vocabulary.

Introduction

Vocabulary is crucial to every stage of learning. It is central to all stages of learning because it makes up the total aspect of learning. Vocabulary are words which makes up a whole language. Adequate knowledge of the vocabulary of a language makes the language speaker to be proficient in the language. In foreign language learning, vocabulary is the first component the learners need to learn. Vocabulary is a sole component of a language. A lack of vocabulary mastery will lead to communication breakdown. Besides for communication purpose, vocabulary mastery is also needed for the sake of accessing knowledge.

Vocabulary has been given different definitions by different scholars. Ijiwola (2012), defined it as knowing the names of things and understanding feelings and concept. To Fadimilehim (2010), it is a reflection of an individual's knowledge and concepts in a particular area. Vocabulary is generically the

knowledge of words and word meanings. More specifically, vocabulary refers to the kind of words that students must know to read increasingly demanding text with comprehension.

Vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas and communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts. Vocabulary is the glue that holds stories, ideas and content together... making comprehension accessible (Fakeye, 2016). Students' word knowledge is linked strongly to academic success because students who have large vocabularies can understand new ideas and concepts more quickly than students with limited vocabularies. The high correlation in the research literature of word knowledge indicates that if students do not adequately and steadily grow their vocabulary knowledge, comprehension will be affected (Enu, 2016).

Vocabulary knowledge contributes to

comprehension, fluency and student achievement. Vocabulary is the set of words within a language that one is familiar with. A vocabulary usually develops with age and serve as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. Acquiring an extensive vocabulary is one of the largest challenges in learning English as a second language (ESL). It has been clearly established that there is a strong relationship between the knowledge of words and word meanings (vocabulary) and usage of word meaning (semantics) (Enu, 2016). Given the importance of English language in education and as a language of wider communication, the need for vocabulary development from primary school to the university is highly essential. Students therefore must develop their vocabulary to be able to cope satisfactorily with their reading capacity. Versed knowledge in vocabulary will afford the students the opportunity to derive meanings more easily from whatever they read than someone who has poor vocabulary (Graves, 2016).

Despite the importance of vocabulary in the teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria, report have indicated that students exhibit gross deficiency in vocabulary achievement due to their limited vocabulary knowledge (Owooke, 2011). Empirical literature has documented efforts of scholars in sealing up the performance of student in vocabulary. These include adoption of learners centred strategies for teaching vocabulary explicitly in schools (such strategies includes; instructional strategy ((Fakeye, 2016), memorization strategy (Fadimilehin, 2010), content based instruction strategy (Olurankinse, 2011) and list-group-label strategy (Enu, 2016). Despite the useful insight provided by the findings of these studies into the teaching and learning of English vocabulary, the trend of poor performance by student in English vocabulary has not improved. These might not be unconnected with little emphasis given to the other teacher related variables in research. These includes teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching.

The mastery of subject matter is an essential skill that a teacher requires to be endowed with, in the teaching and learning process as it has a direct impact on teaching and learning process in schools. Teachers must be knowledgeable in their area of study (Kimberly 2009). Teachers are required to know what they are teaching because understanding of subject matter by a teacher implies that the teachers is able to grasp the main points and teach them to the learners, and to correct any misconceptions of knowledge, and all this revolves around the teacher's understanding of the subject matter. The teacher's mastery of the subject matter influences the learners understanding of the subjects they learn, performance and the eventual attainment of national goals. Mastery of the subject matter by the teachers helps them to impart knowledge effectively and confidently. It is through the mastery of subject matter that the teachers are able to impart the right skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity that are based on the three learning domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Most teachers do not possess the mastery of the subject. The reason for this may be that English language is a second language and they may have not acquired and master the language. Subject matter knowledge is a variable that is related to teacher effectiveness. There is therefore, the need to find out through research the influence of teachers' subject matter competence on students' academic achievement in English vocabulary. Studies on the influence of teachers' subject matter competence has been carried out on different subjects but the extent to which it will predict students' achievement in English vocabulary has not been determined in Lagelu Local Government of Oyo State.

Another factor is teachers' passion for teaching. Passion for teaching, a strong motivational factor that affects teachers' performance, is closely connected to teachers' commitment to teaching. Passion is the level of attachment of a teacher to the job. Passion is "a strong inclination or desire towards an activity (e.g., one's job) that one likes (or even loves) and

finds importance and in which one invests time and energy” (Carbonneau, Vallerand, Fernet, & Guay, 2018). Passion is a motivational factor that affects teacher performance. It drives the teachers for a better student accomplishment. Passionate teachers create an effective learning environment and increase learning potential of students. Passion leads to creativity; therefore, passionate teachers have the ability to think and produce new notions in an easy way. Passionate teachers are committed and dedicated to their schools and a good education achievement is an outcome of this commitment and dedication.

Passionate teaching brings value to learning because of its motivational properties and because it's perceived as caring, valued, by the learner (Carbonneau et al, 2018). Passionate teachers are distinguished by their commitment to achievement of their students. So a teacher with positive passion may then create a positive learning spiral where thoughts are expanded and lifted, which increases learning potential. Concepts are better remembered from an enthusiastic teacher and intense emotions improve memory for central detail.

Many factors have an influence on teachers' levels of commitment to student learning. Of the factors listed in the various studies, many did not study an impact on student achievement (Alonge, 2019). Also, teachers' passion for teaching has not been used to predict achievement in English vocabulary. It is therefore important to foster teachers' motivation as part of the measures to address the problem of dwindling quality of education especially, students' achievement in English vocabulary. This study investigated teachers' passion to the teaching profession, and how this affects students' achievement in English vocabulary. This empirical study will contribute to a better understanding of how passion affects learners and what qualities comprise it, which may manifest changes in learning behaviours and performance in English vocabulary.

Statement of Problem

Vocabulary is the engine room of language use. Without vocabulary knowledge, there will

be a breakdown in accessing background knowledge, expressing ideas, communicating effectively and learning new concepts. However, reports have it that the performance of students in English vocabulary and English language as a whole at the senior secondary school level of education has not been encouraging. Efforts at addressing this problem had led researchers to experiment with various strategies. In spite of significant contributions of these studies, the trend of poor performance still continues. This study shift focus on teacher related variables such as teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching. Previous studies on these variables confirmed their strong influence on academic success but they had not been combined in a study of this nature to determine their relationship with students' performance in English vocabulary. Hence, this study was carried out to investigate the extent to which these teacher characteristics could predict students' academic performance in English vocabulary among public senior secondary students in Lagelu Local Government of Oyo State.

Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. What relationship exists between the independent variable (English vocabulary) and the independent variables (teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching)?
2. What is the composite contribution of teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching to students' achievement in English vocabulary?
3. What is the relative contribution of teachers' subject matter competence and teachers' passion for teaching to students' achievement in English vocabulary?

Scope of the study

The study investigated the extent to which teachers' subject matter competence and

teachers' passion for teaching would predict students' achievement in English language. It covered twenty (20) senior secondary schools in Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Significance of the Study

The study investigated teacher- related factors as predictors of senior secondary students' achievement in English vocabulary in selected public schools in Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State. Findings from this study would reveal empirical information on the teacher related factors that could predict student academic achievement in English vocabulary. The study would also contribute to research efforts geared towards finding a prominent solution to the problems of poor performance of students in English vocabulary and English language as a whole. It will also serve as an eye opener to teachers and other stakeholders on which of the teacher related factor could most predict students' learning outcomes in English language.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive design of a correlational type. This is appropriate since the researcher has no direct control of the independent variables as their manifestations have already existed. Twenty (20) senior secondary schools were randomly selected in

Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State. From each selected schools, forty (40) S.S. II students were randomly selected. All S.S 2 English teachers in the selected schools were involved in the study. In all a total of 800 students and twenty (20) English teachers participated. The instruments used were:: English Vocabulary Achievement Test ($r=0.78$), Teachers' Subject Mastery Scale ($r=0.81$) and Teachers' Passion for teaching Scale ($r=0.87$) The researcher along with the research assistants guided the students and teachers during the process of data collection. During the process of data collection, a teacher was observed twice and the achievement test was administered after teachers' observation in all schools. Hence, the collection of data for the study took four weeks after which the data were analysed. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Answering of Research Questions

Research Questions 1: What is the relationship between independent variables (teachers' subject matter competence, passion for teaching) and students' achievement in English vocabulary?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix showing the correlation between teachers' subject matter competence, passion for teaching and students' achievement in English vocabulary

Variable	Students' achievement in English vocabulary	Teachers' subject matter competence	Passion for teaching
Students' achievement in English vocabulary	1		
Teachers' subject matter competence	0.166* .002	1	
Passion for teaching	.282* .029	.207* .007	1
Mean	22.51	71.62	47.45
S.D	1.805	12.705	5.853

*Denotes correlation at 0.05 level of significant

Table 1 shows that there is positive weak significant relationships between teachers' subject matter competence and students' achievement in English vocabulary ($r = 0.166$; $P < .05$). This implies that for students' achievement in English vocabulary to improve, there must be an improvement in the teachers' subject matter competence. Teachers' passion for teaching also has positive and weak significant relationship with students'

achievement in English vocabulary ($r = 0.282$; $P < .05$), this implies that teachers' passion for teaching is positively related to students' achievement in English vocabulary.

Research Question 2: What is the composite contribution of the independent variables (teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching) to students' achievement in English vocabulary?

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis showing the composite contribution of the independent variables (teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching) to students' achievement in English vocabulary

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	5.170	2	2.585	.775	.017	Sig.
Residual	56.735	17	3.337			
Total	61.906	19				
R = .389 R Square = .184 Adjusted R ² = .124 Std. Error of the Estimate = 2.82685						

Table 2 shows the composite contribution of the independent variables (teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching) to the prediction of the dependent variable that is, students' achievement in English vocabulary. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at $P < .05$. Table 4.2 shows that the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the regression yielded a F-ratio of 0.775 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant. Table 4.2 further

revealed a coefficient of multiple correlation ($R = .389$ and a multiple R^2 of .184). This means that 18.4% of the variance was accounted for by the independent variables when taken together and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

Research Question 3: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching) to students' achievement in English vocabulary?

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis showing the relative contribution of the independent variables (teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching) to students' achievement in English vocabulary

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	Rank	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	19.051	4.172				.000
Teachers' subject matter competence	.009	.033	.064	2nd	.276	.004*
Passion for teaching	.087	.072	.281	1 st	1.212	.023*

*Denotes correlation at 0.05 level of significant

Table .3 revealed the relative contributions and levels of significance of the independent variables expressed in beta weights to the dependent variable (students' achievement in English vocabulary). The relative contribution of teachers' subject matter competence to students' achievement in English vocabulary was significant ($\beta = .06$, $t = .28$). The relative contribution of teachers' passion for teaching students' achievement in English vocabulary was also significant ($\beta = .28$).

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between teacher subject matter competence, teachers' passion for teaching and students' achievement in English vocabulary.

The study showed that teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching had positive significant relationship with students' achievement in English vocabulary. A possible reason for this is that when teachers have good knowledge of subject matter, they are able to use simple illustration, correct explanations and definition of concepts that will enable students to learn and excel. This is because there is high correlation between what teachers know and what they teach. Teachers' knowledge of subject matter largely determine the effectiveness of a teacher. Mastery of the subject matter by teachers helps to impart knowledge effectively and confidently. Also, passion for teaching as a motivational factor drives teachers for better student accomplishment. Teachers with passion are fiercely devoted to their work and greatly inspire their students. Passion for teaching drives teachers for better student accomplishment. The findings were consistent with those of Alonge (2019; Olakunde, 2023) who reported that there is a strong connection between teacher subject matter competence, teachers' passion for teaching and students' achievement. This finding is consistent with Fakeye (2012) who found out that teachers' mastery of subject matter contributes significantly to students' academic achievement.

Composite contribution of teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching to students' achievement in English vocabulary.

The study found that the composite contribution of the independent variables (teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching) to the dependent variable was significant. An explanation for this can be due to the fact that what teachers know is what they teach. Nobody can teach what he/she does not understand or know. The teacher's mastery of the subject matter influences the learner's understanding of the subject they learn, performance and the eventual attainment of the national goals. Also, when a teacher has passion, he/she will search for current information, give remedial assistance to students when needed and take teaching as their life. All these, reflex in the way they interact with the students in the class. This is consistent with Olowoyeye and Abioye (2014) who in a separate study reported that teacher subject matter competence and passion for teaching contributes majorly to students' achievement in English vocabulary.

Relative contribution of teacher subject matter competence and passion for teaching to students' achievement in English vocabulary.

The study found that the relative contribution of teacher subject matter competence and passion for teaching to students' academic achievement was significant. This might be in connection to the fact that teachers' subject mastery and passion for teaching have been identified in education as essential factors that influence learning. Mastery of subject matter enables the teacher to teach and explain the subject matter content well and make the learners conceive early. Passion for teaching contributes to teacher's motivation and performance. Passionate teachers have an effect on student achievement. There is a strong correlation between passionate teaching and successful student learning. The findings corroborate with the popular belief that teachers'

own knowledge of subject matter influences their effort to help students learn. It is also in line with the view of Johannes.M and Ludger.W (2010) who found a significant effect of teacher subject knowledge on student achievement. Also,

Conclusion

The study investigated teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching as predictors of students' achievement in English vocabulary in Lagelu local Government Area of Oyo State. Findings revealed that teachers' subject matter competence and passion for teaching are good predictors of students' achievement in English vocabulary. It can therefore be concluded that when teachers are committed to their profession, and they demonstrate good knowledge of what they teach, they tend to impact positively on the learners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Teachers should attend regular workshops, seminars and training programmes that are focused on teachers' subject area, in order to increase their knowledge in teaching.
2. Also, teachers should endeavour to develop themselves by engaging in further studies, for deeper knowledge of the subject they teach.
3. Teachers of English should be given all the needed motivations so as to make them passionate with their job.
4. The Teaching Service Commission, saddled with the responsibility of recruiting teachers should make passion for teaching as one of the criteria in promoting teachers.

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